

Gabble and Rush

JOHN ROSSELLI

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Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

AFTER talking about it off and on for more than seventy years, the British still are not sure whether their National Theatre can be ready in time for the fourth centenary of Shakespeare's birth on April 23, 1964. But the government and the London County Council between them have put up the \$6,440,000 needed; two committees, studded with enough lordships to make up a Shakespearean cast, are preparing to build and run the theatre; and Sir Laurence Olivier is to be the first director.

Of the two companies that were originally supposed to join forces in the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare at Stratford-on-Avon can look back on many brilliant productions, but only in the past couple of years has it started building up a permanent company. Ironically, it had barely set up for the first time a London outpost at the Aldwych Theatre—whose *Troilus and Cressida*, already seen at Stratford and Edinburgh, has been acclaimed as one of the finest Shakespearean productions in recent years—when it decided, for reasons that are still obscure, to pull out of the National Theatre project.

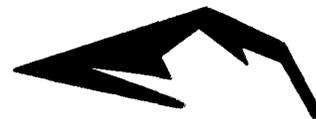
The other company, the Old Vic, has (as some American theatregoers have discovered) gone through a period of doldrums, relieved by some good work in non-Shakespearean plays like *Ghosts* and Schiller's *Mary Stuart*. Under a new hard-driving director, Michael Elliott, it may achieve the strength and cohesion it will need as the nucleus of the National Theatre. And London playgoers have had a chance this fall to see the company at its best in *Peer Gynt*, a rough but vigorous stab at an elusive target.

UNHAPPILY, the Old Vic's new vigor has not entirely reassured those who witnessed the near-disaster of Olivier's three productions at the first Chichester Festival, held this summer in a brand-new theatre sixty miles south of London and widely taken as a rehearsal for Sir Lau-

rence's coming work at the National Theatre. The Chichester theatre, a mushroom shape on the outskirts of a small cathedral town, aroused much interest as the nearest thing in Britain to the neo-Elizabethan playhouse that Tyrone Guthrie brought into being at Stratford, Ontario. This was no accident: Guthrie's work was a strong influence. The smart audiences that descended on Chichester found themselves sitting fanned out around three sides of a large platform stage. Their almost unanimous complaint was that a lot of the time they could neither see nor hear properly.

Chichester's one success, *Uncle Vanya*, suggested mostly that if you put on Chekhov with a star cast (Olivier, Michael Redgrave, Joan Plowright, Sybil Thorndike) something remarkable is bound to come through. *The Chances*, a Beaumont and Fletcher comedy reworked in the Restoration period, was just a mediocre play. John Ford's *The Broken Heart* provided the fairest test—a stately, melancholy work of the post-Shakespearean decadence, unknown to the public at large but admired by students for the strange plangency of its verse. Unfortunately, the Chichester test made it seem an incomprehensible bore. So as to give everyone a chance to see the actors, Olivier made them scamper about almost as fast as if they had been playing *Charley's Aunt* rather than a work whose atmosphere should recall a court portrait by Van Dyck. Along the way most of them, Olivier included, rushed through their lines: a lot of the time the audience just did not know what they were talking about. The climax of absurdity came when the heroine (the beautiful, clear-spoken Rosemary Harris), dying of heartbreak and inanition, announced that she "must leave the world to revel in Elysium"—and all the while kept scurrying about with the energy of a physical-education teacher.

Gabble and rush also affected *Peer Gynt*, the Old Vic's first venture under the new régime. One reason



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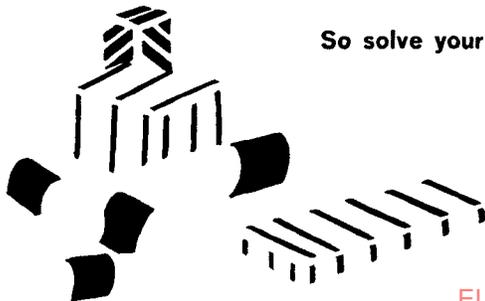
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THE REPORTER Acrostickler® No. 67

by HENRY ALLEN

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Each crossword definition contains two clues. One is a conventional synonym; the other a pun, anagram, or play on words.
- 2) Letters from the acrostic should be transferred to the corresponding squares in the crossword, and vice versa.
- 3) The initial letters of the correct words in the acrostic will, when read down, spell out the name of a prominent person: the acrostician.

A. 184 214 96 136 112 36 154 54 18
 "When bad men combine, the good must ____." Burke, "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents."

B. 42 138 76 200 150 "Shall they ____ me up
 And show me to the shouting varletry
 Of censuring Rome?" Shakespeare, "Antony and Cleopatra."

C. 50 32 122 108 160 10 182 74 220
 "Out went the taper as she hurried in;
 Its little smoke, in pallid ____, died."
 Keats, "The Eve of Saint Agnes."

D. 60 66 72 20 166 194 44 94 34 4 102 46 134 26
 A football play (3-6,5).

E. 100 170 204 12 52 176 Perform an act with
 reference to a person or thing (2,2,2).

F. 15 142 152 38 222 190 28 211 84 An associ-
 ate and rival of the Acrostician.

G. 6 202 62 188 168 224 88 Freest from
 irregularities.

H. 208 68 22 198 30 2 132 114 A name borne
 by at least two submarines in the U.S. Navy.

I. 58 216 98 124 116 "____ face and grubby
 'and—Law! Wot do they understand?"
 Kipling, "Mandalay."

J. 178 16 206 162 64 On whom some by-
 standers believed Jesus cried from the
 Cross.

K. 8 126 92 90 24 192 164 48 156 180 One of
 the kinds of law referred to by Aquinas
 in the "Summa Theologica" (Latin) (3,7).

L. 158 56 70 80 210 128
 "A pretty sort of prison I have come to,
 In which a self-respecting lady's cell
 Is treated as a ____." Beerbohm,
 "Savonarola Brown."

M. 130 218 146 104 110 172 118 196 174
 "I raised thee up under the ____: there thy
 mother brought thee forth..." Song of
 Solomon.

1	2	H	3	4	D	5	6	G	7	8	K	9	10	C	11	12	E		15	F		
16	J		18	A		20	D		22	H		24	K		26	D		28	F		30	H
31	32	C	33	34	D	35	36	A	37	38	F	39		41	42	B	43	44	D	45		
46	D		48	K		50	C		52	E		54	A		56	L		58	I		60	D
61	62	G	63	64	J	65	66	D		68	H	69	70	L	71	72	D	73	74	C	75	
76	B					80	L					84	F				88	G			90	K
91	92	K	93	94	D	95	96	A		98	I	99	100	E	101	102	D	103	104	M	105	
			108	C		110	M		112	A		114	H		116	I		118	M			
121	122	C	123	124	I	125	126	K	127	128	L		130	M	131	132	H	133	134	D	135	
136	A		138	B					142	F			146	M							150	B
151	152	F	153	154	A	155	156	K	157	158	L		160	C	161	162	J	163	164	K	165	
166	D		168	G		170	E		172	M		174	M		176	E		178	J		180	K
181	182	C	183	184	A	185			187	188	G	189	190	F	191	192	K	193	194	D	195	
196	M		198	H		200	B		202	G		204	E		206	J		208	H		210	L
211	F			214	A	215	216	I	217	218	M	219	220	C	221	222	F	223	224	G	225	

Across

1. With 98, a conclusion of satisfaction, according to Shakespeare (4,4,4,4).
31. Will a god kiss or form those who appeal to insurance men? (4,5).
36. He is in spirit and gets a discharge.
61. Sane or not, it's thought.
68. A baker's product, a copper, and an emmet are plentiful.
91. Hewings seem to be questionings, I hear, almost.
98. See 1 across.
121. Find a colleague in a Corn-Free State.
130. As about one of mine, it entertains.
151. Clan Arun is not fleshly.
160. A partaker who was a secret of Conrad's.
181. Is wrongdoing first-rate in this peninsula?
187. Necessity's offspring is not in vein.
214. A race after part of the church?

Down

1. Homeland of the Acrostician.
3. Lewisite girl is real? Oh, yes, indeed!
5. Put a fellow arm on German leaders? Yes, they hold these militarists.
7. A deadly kind of 174.
9. B. Russell's goals are not found in TNT bases (4,4).
11. You'll find no rap way downstage.
15. A monetary system which gives economic advice, it's said.
28. Dears hold bats and become arguers.
93. A penny after lodging and love? It's blameless.
101. Is my pinch so musical?
112. How do you rate vice? Productive?
121. Red couscous flowed rapidly.
135. Do you find anger with the little saint? It's very queer.
155. Riot? Riot.
163. A Spanish queen is in Navarre in a state gown.
174. This sin is found in devilry and high living.